

Beaverton's Native Plant of the Month: Mock Orange

Common Name: Mock Orange

Binomial Name: *Philadelphus lewisii*

Soil Type: Drought-tolerant

Sunlight: Full to partial sun

Plant Type: Small shrub

Form: Rounded

Foliage: Deciduous

Fruit/Flower: Yes, both



The binomial/scientific name for Mock Orange, *Philadelphus lewisii*, originates from the Pacific Northwest explorer, Meriwether Lewis (of the Lewis and Clark expedition), who collected the plant in 1806. Native Americans have also long used Mock Orange for a variety of purposes; the hard wood was ideal for furniture and tools, while the leaves and bark can be used with water as a natural soap.

Mock Orange gets its common name from the native plant's sweet and citrusy scent, reminiscent of oranges with a hint of pineapple. At the end of their long stems, the Mock Orange produces clusters of flowers each with four white petals and yellow stamens. This round shrub grows to 1.5 to 3 meters tall, and when the flowers are in full bloom, the plant appears covered in blossoms. The light green leaves are opposite (two leaves grow from the stem at the same level, on opposite sides of the stem), with serrated edges and a rough texture. Its fruit is a centimeter-long hard, winged capsule containing brown seeds.

Along with the strong, fruity scent and showy flowers, Mock Orange's tolerance to poor soils and drought make this an ideal choice for those seeking a low-maintenance deciduous shrub for almost any landscape or garden. This plant is also a wonderful pick to attract wildlife like butterflies with beautiful, fragrant blossoms. But because their flowers also tend to attract bees, Mock Orange is best when placed away from doors.

This Native Plant of the Month has been brought to you by the City of Beaverton's Landscape and Urban Forestry Department along with Clean Water Services. Visit [Clean Water Service's Native Plant Finder](#) webpage for interactive questions to help you find the right native plant to fit your needs!